

## What you should know

■ The CSU Regional Archives is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. Located in the Blakenmore building at the south campus of the university, access can be gained via College Avenue or Hely Avenue.

■ Members of the public are welcome to visit the search room, where professional archival staff can assist with enquiries. For those unable to visit the archives in person, staff can provide a research service for straightforward enquiries for a fee of \$55 per hour, including copying and postage.

■ For further information, phone 6925 3666, email [archive@csu.edu.au](mailto:archive@csu.edu.au) or visit the website at [www.csu.edu.au/research/archives](http://www.csu.edu.au/research/archives) for a full listing of holdings and more detailed information.

# Govt Gazette volumes arrive

at the archives

Wayne Doubleday



*The New South Wales Government*

*Gazettes* are an imposing sight in the CSU Regional Archives search room. These bound volumes of the *Government Gazette* are on special loan from the Wagga office of the NSW Department of Lands, and contain a wealth of information that can assist both researchers

and family historians.

The original purpose of the *Government Gazette* was to publish the official notices of the NSW government.

The regional archives has a full run of issues, from the first notice published in March 1832 until December 1870, available on microfilm.

The bound volumes follow on from 1870 to December 1959, then October 1970 to May 1997. Both the microfilm and the bound volumes are available to the general public in the search room.

The following is a just a sample of the type of information which can be found in the NSW *Government Gazette*:

■ Notifications of appointments to, transfers, promotions and retirements

within the public service (positions in schools, courts, hospitals, the police service, local government and on the railways are most common);

■ The opening and closing of schools, courts, hospitals, police stations and other government services and departments;

■ Applications and approvals of licences such as publicans, auctioneers, and water rights;

■ Mining claims and land grants, transfers, leases, and sales;

■ Details of absconded prisoners, rewards, tickets of leave and certificates of freedom; and

■ Lists of medical practitioners, marriage celebrants and ministers of religion.

The regional archives also holds bound copies of the *Victorian Government Gazette*, covering the period from January 1855 through to December 1981.

■ UNTIL the middle of November, an exhibition of artwork by fine arts students entitled *Nothing under a Grand* will be displayed in the CSU Regional Archives foyer. This exhibition space is open to the public 9am to 5pm, Monday to Friday.

The students who created the artwork and mounted the exhibition are Shereen Hallett, Morgaine Whilesmith and Tegan Bailey. They are participating in the joint degree between Riverina Institute of TAFE and the Charles Sturt University visual arts program.

## Scourge of summer devastates district

The last days of 1904 brought devastation to the Wagga district and to many other parts of NSW in the form of massive bushfires. However, as a direct result of these fires, the formation of many official bushfire brigades began.

On Friday, December 30, 1904 some grass and timber were set alight on Aragoel, near Galore. The fire travelled in an easterly direction from there to Urquandilly, where it joined up with two other fires, one that had begun in the Collingulie area and the other at Grubben, west of Yerong Creek.

Early on Saturday morning the fire reached Lake Albert. The now enormous fire continued unchallenged, sweeping through Gregadoo and moving towards Big Springs, Book Book, Pullitop, Kyeamba, and Hummulla. The fire also moved across to Forest Hill, Ladysmith, Borambola and Tarcutta.

By Tuesday, some rain had fallen in most areas, extinguishing what was left of the flames. The *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* reported it had been estimated that, "the width of flame at Tarcutta extended from the Murrumbidgee to Tumbarumba".

Due to the enormous destruction the bushfires had caused throughout NSW that summer, government officials began gathering information regarding the causes of bushfires, and the best methods of preventing and coping with them.

A number of larger properties had their own small water carts, and farmers and graziers would come together when bushfires threatened, but this was the extent of organisation for fighting bushfires within the Riverina area.

In November 1905, the *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* commented that it would be difficult to provide an efficient organisation in the form of a bushfire brigade owing to the "obstacle of providing remuneration for the workers, and that any action in this direction ... should be initiated by country residents themselves".

However, the newspaper applauded the suggestion of correspondent, Mr WA Lucus of Millwood Road, that farmers with adjoining properties should jointly purchase fire-fighting equipment and station them at a central farm. He and his neighbours had recently bought a fire-pump and a 200 gallon tank for the sum of only £10. These were to be placed on a dray and stationed at Mr Corrin's property, ready for use.



These photographs form a part of the Tom Lennon Collection (RW1574/759) held at the CSU Regional Archives and show past methods used for fighting fires. Lennon was a photographer for *The Daily Advertiser* during the 1950s and 1960s. His collection is comprised of mostly black and white prints and thousands of negatives. The collection is available to the public and can be searched by subject category.



The next reported move in the Wagga district towards the formation of bushfire brigades was made by the village of Tarcutta. A meeting was held on December 4, 1905, where officers were elected and arrangements made to attend all bushfires within a 10-mile radius of Tarcutta.

The Farmers and Settlers Association of Mangain was the next to call a public meeting to create a bushfire brigade, which was held on December 23, 1905.

The formation of the Lake Albert Bushfire Brigade was also extensively reported in *The Wagga Wagga Advertiser*. Its first meeting was held on January 2, 1906. Mr C Annison was elected captain, along with four men as

lieutenants, and seven scouts. A number of tanks, pumps and hoses were soon purchased, along with waterpots and hides to use as firebeaters.

Within 12 months of the devastation caused by the 1904-1905 bushfires, at least three official bushfire brigades existed in the Wagga district. Today, there are some 75 brigades in the Riverina zone alone, an area that covers 15,450 square kilometres.

■ References: *Wagga Wagga Advertiser* January 3 and 5, 1905; November 28 and 30, 1905; December 7 and 14, 1905; January 4, 11 and 27, 1906; February 3, 1906; NSW Rural Fire Service website [www.riverinazone.conxion.com.au/](http://www.riverinazone.conxion.com.au/)